that Greek fret, now, I believe, usually known by the Italian name Guilloche (!), which is exactly a case in point. It so happens that in crystals of bismuth, formed by the unagitated cooling of the melted metal, there occurs a natural resemblance of it almost perfect. But crystals of bismuth not only are of unusual occurrence in every-day life, but their form is, as far as I know, unique among minerals; and not only unique, but only attainable by an artificial process, the metal itself never being found pure. I do not remember any other substance or arrangement which presents a resemblance to this Greek ornament; and I think that I may trust my remembrance as including most of the arrangements which occur in the outward forms of common and familiar things. On this ground, then, I allege that ornament to be ugly; or, in the literal sense of the word, monstrous; different from any thing which it is the nature of man to admire: and I think an uncarved fillet or plinth infinitely preferable to one covered with this vile concatenation of straight lines: unless indeed it be employed as a foil to a true ornament, which it may, perhaps, sometimes with advantage; or excessively small, as it occurs on coins, the harshness of its arrangement being less perceived."

First, the fret is not known as the *guilloche*: the two are quite distinct, the latter being no "concatenation of straight lines" at all ("vile" or otherwise), whatever the fret may be.

The fret, our readers will scarcely need to be told, is formed of one or more fillets meeting each other *vertically* and *horizontally*, whereas the Guilloche is formed by two or more bands twisting over each other so as to repeat the same curved figure by the spiral returning of the bands.

Passing over this, however, are all geometrical patterns to be condemned as "monstrous," if not taken from natural objects and composed of curves?

Architecture, as the author is forced to admit, deals necessarily with straight lines, and with forms which have no precedent in nature.

Mr. Ruskin lays down as "a law of singular importance in the present day, that we are not to decorate things belonging to purposes of active and occupied life." "Wherever you can rest, there decorate: where rest is forbidden, so is beauty." Adorned shop-fronts are abominations in his eyes; and as to railroad stations,—but let him speak for himself:—

"Another of the strange and evil tendencies of the present day is to the decoration of the railroad station. Now, if there be any place in the world in which people are deprived of that portion of temper and discretion which are necessary to the contemplation of beauty, it is there. It is the very temple of discomfort, and the only charity that the builder can extend to us is to show us, plainly as may be, how soonest to escape from it. The whole system of railroad travelling is addressed to people who, being in a hurry, are therefore, for the time being, miserable. No one would travel in that manner who could help it—who had time to go leisurely over hills and between hedges, instead of through tunnels and between banks: at least those who would, have no sense of beauty so acute as that we need consult it at the station. The railroad is in all its relations a matter of earnest business, to be got through as soon as possible. It transmutes a man from a traveller into a living parcel. For the time he has parted with the nobler characteristics of his humanity for the sake of a planetary power of locomotion. Do not ask [illegible] to admire any thing. You might as well ask the wind. Carry him safely, dismiss him soon: he will thank you for nothing else. All attempts to please him in any other way are mere mockery, and insults to the things by which you endeavour to do so. There never was more flagrant nor impertinent folly than the smallest portion of ornament in any thing concerned with railroads or near them. Keep them out of the way, take them through the ugliest country you can find, confess them the miserable things they are, and spend nothing upon them but for safety and speed."

We have great respect for our author; his eloquence and earnestness in parts have warmed and delighted us: but we cannot avoid saying that, to our poor comprehension, this last paragraph is simply nonsense.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION.

SUCH an exhibition as the present ought to prove a source of gratification to all interested in the progress of British art. Each successive visit brings fresh conviction of its excellence. Notwithstanding the observable absence of Maclise, and the weakened efforts of Etty, no other nation could produce in a collection of the year so large a number of works of art of such pretensions. High art is ably supported by Mr. Herbert and a few others this year, whilst the poetry of Messrs. Stanfield and Danby's noble landscapes, and the intense feeling and elevated intention so elaborately yet graphically worked out by Mr. E. M. Ward, in his picture of "De Foe," almost entitle them to be considered in the same category. A feeling seems obviously to have arisen that *a dip* into past catalogues, or a selection from the old *repertoire* of subjects, will no longer pass current with the public, who are becoming *discerning*.

Amongst the strictly historical pictures, Mr. Egg, A. (8), "Henrietta Maria in distress, relieved by Cardinal de Retz," has high claims to praise; in fact, as far as colour and painting are to be considered, it is perfectly wonderful, but the conception of the desolate queen does not please us. The same artist has another extraordinary picture for colour and execution, evidently founded on Paul Veronese,—(473), "Launce's substitute for Proteus's dog." Mr. Egg exhibits painstaking and research in all his productions, in these last particularly, and great power over the mechanical part of the profession.

(13) "The Desert,"—a dead lion, painted with Landseer's sweeping pencil, has not that charm which belongs to the majority of this artist's work. Through accident, portraits of M. Guizot and Prince Metternich form pendants on either side of this dead representative of royalty. (23) "Religious Controversy in the time of Louis XIV.," A. Elmore (A.), is a work of art creditable to any age, characterized by qualities of the highest order. The head of the Protestant clergyman,—indeed, the whole figure,—is finely conceived; the composition of the heads to the right of the spectator, strikingly beautiful; and the drapery of the cardinal, to the left, is painted in a masterly manner. The figure of the boy whispering to the gorgeously-attired lady, and, amongst the accessories, the table-cloth and carpet, with the back ground generally, exhibit great facility and knowledge. (378) Subject from Tristram Shandy, out of the artist's way, is not equal to some other productions; whilst (471) "Lady Macbeth," though melodramatic and exaggerated, is an extraordinary piece of painting. (43) "Omnia Vanitas," W. Dyce, R.A., represents a female in the zenith of her charms, with a skull on which her hand is resting. It is beautifully painted: the drawing of the arm seems questionable.

(60) "Amoret Chained," by Etty, R.A., may not be compared with former works by this master; nevertheless the flesh tints are scarcely to be surpassed. (72) "Lear Disinheriting Cordelia," by J. R. Herbert, R.A., in progress in fresco in the new Houses of Parliament, is wonderfully grand in treatment, and brings back to memory some of the past great ones. Such a production is an honour to the time. The austere old king, devoid of strained exaggeration, presents the crown to the already struggling and quarrelling husbands of Goneril and Regan; whilst the dutiful and ill-treated Cordelia stands regardless of personal loss, half conscious of her father's impending fate, heedless of the honest Kent's remonstrating at the king's injustice and blind credulity.

A picture on a loftier theme (489), "The Outcast of the People," by the same painter, is still more elevated in its character, and may almost be called sublime.

A covetable and delicious picture is (108) "The Forester's Family," by E. Landseer, R.A. A lovely heather belle feeding fawns, that assemble around her with all their characteristic half-timidity and half-confidence, rubbing the fodder she is loaded with, whilst others are trotting up to receive the accustomed caress from the well-known hand. The upper part of the girl's figure seems somewhat small for the size of her feet and length of limb. (196) "The Free Church" is another beautiful contribution by the same painter; the head of the girl in this is a sweet study of a brunette. (127) "The Syrens Three," W. E. Frost, (A.), is scarcely up to the usual mark; notwithstanding its many excellences and beauties, whether from its being in juxtaposition with Mulready, it looks blacker than usual, and cold compared to the luminous back view (135) "Women bathing." Mr. Mulready in this walks out of his beaten path to exhibit his proficient knowledge of art in all its branches. Perfect drawing and close observance of natural action are the most apparent qualities of this masterpiece,—a severe lesson to the student of the nude figure.

Professor Leslie produces a picture from his favourite "Don Quixote," wherein his taste, humour, learning, and the apparent ease with which he works pre-eminently shine forth.

(141) "The Duke's Chaplain, after attacking Don Quixote for his devotion to knight errantry, and Sancho for his belief in his master, reprimands the Duke for encouraging their fancies, and leaves the company in a passion." The expression of extreme disgust and contempt of the choleric chaplain, the refined mirth of the duchess, the ill-concealed laughter of the duke, the affronted dignity of the chivalric knight, and the astonishment of Sancho, are rendered with astonishing truth, whilst the suppressed risibility of the domestics inclines the spectator to wait until they gave vent, so truthfully is it portrayed. Mr. Leslie is the leader in *genre* painting, and has made Cervantes and Le Sage almost his own by strictly working out their texts. A smaller picture from Henry VIII., by the same painter (55), is a genuine embodiment of Shakspeare.

THE ARCHITECTURAL ROOM.*

(1015) "Private chapel and cemetery recently erected at Carnsallock," by E. B. Lamb, is designed with Mr. Lamb's usual propriety. It is decorated in style; and the pointed arch over the doorway is filled with tracery, and serves as a window. The same architect exhibits "The selected design for the Judges' Lodgings, about to be erected at Aylesbury," a plain substantial building of brick, in appearance as close upon a prison as a judge is to a prisoner. (1021) and (1022), two interiors of "Ormond Quay New Church, Dublin," are perfect abominations. On what grounds they were admitted, to the exclusion of better things, and moreover placed in one of the best situations, it is difficult to guess. (1038) "Design for the Normal College, Swansea" (to which the second premium was awarded), by R. A. Potter, is Tudor in character and not without merit. The title of (1043) "Proposed Foundation of an Archway in the front of St. Benet, Gracechurch-street," by E. I'Anson, jun., seems scarcely a right description, if the drawing show, as we understand it to do, the alteration proposed to be made in the lower part of the tower itself, so as to admit of a public passage-way through the side and front of it, for the improvement of the thoroughfare. Mr. I'Anson has a second drawing, "The Front of the Branch Office of the Argus Life Office, Pall-mall" (1118).

(1044) "Meanwood Church, erected near Leeds," by W. Railton, is Early English, with high-pitched roof, and of better character than some of this architect's other works in the same style. (1064) "The New Chapel of Ripon Palace," by the same, is Perpendicular, and includes carved throne, reading-desk, and altar rail. (1050) "South-east View of a Design, *Celsus*, for the Small-pox Hospital," by G. Low, represents a building which is exhibited in another part of the room as by R. H.

* See p. 217, *ante*.

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